

HOUSE BILL 639

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By: Delegates Burns, Benson, Bronrott, Glenn, Kelly, Minnick, Morhaim, Myers, Smigiel, ~~and Walker~~ Walker, Aumann, Cardin, Frank, Holmes, Hubbard, Jennings, Jones, Kach, Lafferty, Levi, McDonough, Nathan-Pulliam, Schuler, Stein, and Weir

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2010

Assigned to: Judiciary

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 27, 2010

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the Courts**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and
4 the Courts; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force;
5 providing that a member of the Task Force may not receive compensation but
6 may be reimbursed for certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to study the
7 military service-related mental health issues and substance abuse problems
8 that may apply or arise in certain court cases and to consider recommending the
9 establishment of a special court for eligible defendants who are veterans or
10 members of the armed services on active duty who appear to suffer from certain
11 problems related to military service; requiring the Task Force to make certain
12 recommendations; requiring the Task Force to report certain findings and
13 recommendations to the Governor, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, and the
14 General Assembly; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
15 relating to the Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the
16 Courts.

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
18 MARYLAND, That

19 (a) There is a Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the
20 Courts.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

2 (1) ~~two~~ three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the
3 President of the Senate;

4 (2) ~~two~~ three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the
5 Speaker of the House;

6 (3) two members of the Judiciary, appointed by the Chief Judge of the
7 Court of Appeals;

8 (4) the Attorney General of Maryland, or the Attorney General's
9 designee;

10 (5) the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs, or the Secretary's designee;

11 (6) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
12 designee;

13 (7) the Executive Director of the Office of Problem Solving Courts; and

14 (8) three veterans or members of the United States armed forces,
15 appointed by the Governor.

16 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

17 (d) The Veteran's Affairs Department and the Administrative Office of the
18 Courts shall jointly provide staff for the Task Force.

19 (e) A member of the Task Force:

20 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

21 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
22 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

23 (f) The Task Force shall:

24 (1) study military service-related mental health issues and substance
25 abuse problems of veterans and members of the armed services on deployment that
26 may appear in civil, family, and criminal cases;

27 (2) study ways the courts may address the incidence of violence, drug
28 use and addiction, alcohol use and addiction, mental health conditions, and crimes
29 committed by some veterans and members of the armed services on active duty,
30 particularly as these problems manifest themselves in cases filed in court; and

1 (3) make recommendations regarding the establishment of a special
2 court for eligible defendants who are military members or veterans and who appear to
3 suffer from mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, or post-traumatic stress syndrome,
4 any of which appear to be related to military service and the readjustment to civilian
5 life which is necessary after combat service.

6 (g) On or before December 1, 2011, the Task Force shall report its findings
7 and recommendations to the Governor and the Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of
8 Appeals and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the
9 General Assembly.

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 ~~July~~ October 1, 2010. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and ~~6~~ 3 months
12 and, at the end of December 31, 2011, with no further action required by the General
13 Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.